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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
Field Crops Research Branch
Section of Weed Investigations

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THE CONTROL OF WILD HONEYSUCKLE

Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica Thunb.) was introduced into the United States from the Orient many years ago, and while still valued as an ornamental and for planting on steep slopes, it is more generally known as a troublesome weed. It grows wild throughout most of the southern United States and as far north as Cleveland, Ohio. If not controlled, it forms dense thickets of climbing or trailing vines, almost impossible to penetrate, and is very injurious to the shrubs over which it grows. Honeysuckle often becomes a serious weed in apple orchards and other uncultivated areas, but it seldom is troublesome in cultivated land that is given proper attention.

Honeysuckle is a woody perennial. The stems live over winter and even the leaves remain on the vines most of the year. The main root, the size of a lead pencil or larger, grows horizontally for several feet at a depth of from 1 to 4 inches. Leafy shoots may arise from any point on the root.

Control by Mechanical Means

Mowing or cutting honeysuckle close to the ground does not kill it, for new shoots are sent up almost immediately from the roots. Nevertheless, if cutting is repeated every time the new shoots are 6 to 8 inches long, the roots eventually die.

The control of honeysuckle may also be achieved by pulling it out by the roots. This is best done in very early spring or late autumn, when the ground is soft after freezing and thawing or after protracted rains. At that time the honeysuckle roots can be dragged out in long pieces with the aid of a light mattock. In midsummer, or any time when the ground is dry and hard, the roots are almost impossible to remove without breaking, and any broken pieces that remain in the soil quickly send up new sprouts.

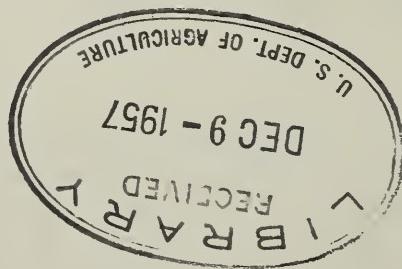
Control with Chemicals

2,4-D: Effective control of honeysuckle may be obtained with ester or amine salt formulations of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) applied to the newly expanded leaves. An ester form of 2,4-D will usually produce the best results. Where danger of injury by volatilization of 2,4-D to nearby susceptible plants exists, the low volatile esters, or an amine salt formulation should be used. Care should be taken that the spray solution does not drift onto susceptible crops or ornamental plants.

Use two to four pounds of the active ingredient (2,4-D) in 100 gallons of water. This mixture should be applied as a spray, and the foliage should be covered thoroughly. One application of 2,4-D will kill most of the honeysuckle, but retreatment will be required to kill regrowth or plants that were missed.

2,4-D and 2,4,5-T: A brush killer containing equal parts of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T) may be used in the same way as 2,4-D to kill honeysuckle as well as other woody species. Where honeysuckle and poison ivy occur together, the brush killer may be used for both weeds simultaneously.

Ammonium sulfamate: This chemical can be used to kill honeysuckle growing close to shrubs, gardens and economic crops provided normal precautions of application are observed. Use 75 to 100 lbs. of the compound in 100 gallons of water. Addition of 4 ounces of a wetting agent will improve the effectiveness of the chemical.



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